

MAY 9 1965

CPYRGH5 Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00001R000100350010-8

FOES OF DONOVAN SEE RE-ELECTION

Slips Irk School Board, but
Public Split Is Feared
CPYRGHT

By LEONARD BUEER

Opposition has developed among the members of the Board of Education to the re-election of James B. Donovan as president of the board, which votes for its officers Tuesday.

However, even those members who would like Mr. Donovan to step down, concede that he probably could muster enough support to be re-elected. A big factor in Mr. Donovan's favor is the reluctance of the board members to risk a public split at this time.

Mr. Donovan's one-year term will expire on Tuesday when the board holds its annual meeting. The election of officers is on the agenda for the public session, which will start at 4 P.M. at board headquarters, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn.

Ironically, Mr. Donovan's critics on the board feel that he has proved to be a hard-working, conscientious and, for the most part, able president.

But they also feel that Mr. Donovan has a penchant for saying the wrong things and needlessly provoking new controversies.

At least three, and perhaps four or more, of the nine board members are known to consider Mr. Donovan to be temperamentally unsuited for the board post.

But it is considered unlikely that they will publicly oppose Mr. Donovan.

"It would be an awful slap in the face," said one board member who favors a change in leadership. "He doesn't deserve to be publicly humiliated."

The board, moreover, is having troubles with Dr. Calvin E. Gross, the Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Gross was put on a 90-day leave of absence on March 3, and the board is now trying to get him to leave the position voluntarily to avoid a legal conflict.

Some members feel that any action against the board president would be misconstrued by the public. There is no connection, however, between the two situations.

Although it is considered unlikely that Tuesday's board meeting will be enlivened by a battle over the presidency, these matters are usually de-



The New York Times

MAY BE RE-ELECTED:
James B. Donovan, whose term as Board of Education president ends on Tuesday.

clined informally in advance so there can be an outward show of harmony—the session may run into difficulty on another point.

Four members of the board are expected to miss the meeting because of other commitments. This would give the board a bare five-member quorum. If only one member present votes against Mr. Donovan or abstains from voting, the board will not be able to conduct the election. The bylaws require board officers to receive at least five votes.

Mr. Donovan has not said publicly that he is a candidate for re-election. But he has indicated that he will be willing to serve again if the other members want him to.

He was first elected president in December, 1963, to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Max J. Rubin. He was re-elected last May to a full term.

During his period in office, he frequently has been involved in controversies because of his off-the-cuff remarks. Last month there were two such incidents. On April 14, toward the end of a 15-hour public hearing on the school system's integration plans, Mr. Donovan made a reference to "so-called" civil rights,

which some persons in the audience regarded as derogatory. A number of clergymen and others representing pro-integration groups walked out of the hall in anger.

On April 28, when the board adopted its integration plan for next fall, Mr. Donovan made another remark that brought public criticism from a board member and denunciations from the city's teachers.

When mention was made of the board's controversial plan to transfer experienced teachers to difficult schools, Mr. Donovan said that methods for reassigning teachers would be worked out with the United Federation of Teachers. Then he added:

"It still remains that if we find the right carrot, it's better than the stick with most donkeys."

When a representative of the U.F.T. objected to the characterization of teachers as donkeys, Mr. Donovan said that he had merely borrowed the quotation from President Johnson.

Morris Iushewitz, a member of the board, then noted that President Johnson had used the statement in reference to the North Vietnamese and declared that it was unfair to apply this to the federation.